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## What drives US immigration policy? Evidence from congressional roll call votes

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Evidence from Congressional Roll Call Votes**

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March 2011

# What Drives U.S. Immigration Policy? Evidence from Congressional Roll Call Votes

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## ABSTRACT

### What Drives U.S. Immigration Policy? Evidence from Congressional Roll Call Votes<sup>\*</sup>

Immigration is one of the most hotly debated policy issues in the United States today. Despite marked divergence of opinions within political parties, several important immigration reforms were introduced in the post 1965 era. The purpose of this paper is to systematically analyze the drivers of congressional voting behavior on immigration policy during the period 1970-2006, and in particular, to assess the role of economic factors at the district level. Our findings provide robust evidence that representatives of more skilled labor abundant constituencies are more likely to support an open immigration policy concerning unskilled labor. Thus, a simple factor-proportions-analysis model provides useful insights regarding the policy making process on one of the most controversial facets of globalization.

JEL Classification: F22, J61

Keywords: immigration policy, voting, political economy

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## 1. Introduction

Immigration and immigration policy have been at the forefront of the U.S. policy debate ever since independence (Hatton and Williamson 2005). Recent evidence suggests that public views on immigration continue to diverge greatly (Scheve and Slaughter 2001, Hanson et al. 2007, Mayda 2006). Even *within* political parties, heterogeneous opinions co-exist. For example, Watanabe and Becerra (2006) report that, “The Republican Party is split among those who want tougher restrictions, those who fear alienating the Latino vote and business owners who are pressing for more laborers to fill blue collar jobs in construction, cleaning, gardening and other industries.” In the usually pro-immigration Democratic Party, labor union constituents are concerned about foreign worker inflows.<sup>1</sup>

Despite controversy, a series of important immigration policy measures were enacted in the post 1965 era. In this paper, we use legislation on unskilled immigration introduced between 1970 and 2006 to systematically analyze the determinants of the voting behavior of U.S. House Representatives on immigration. We focus on the economic drivers of the voting decision, particularly the labor market characteristics of a constituency. To frame our analysis, we start with a simple theoretical model in which heterogeneous districts differ in their relative endowments of skilled and unskilled labor. By changing factor supplies, immigration affects factor income, thus creating winners and losers.<sup>2</sup> An elected politician supports an immigration policy initiative if it increases his/her constituency’s voters well being, and the model shows that he/she is more likely to favor an open immigration policy towards unskilled immigrants the more skilled labor abundant is his/her district.

We test our model’s predictions using a novel dataset covering roll call votes on immigration policy, which potentially affected the supply of unskilled immigrants. We focus on the U.S. House of Representatives over the period 1970-2006. We match votes to a wealth of district level characteristics, both economic and non-economic in nature.

Our empirical analysis suggests that labor market characteristics are statistically significant drivers of a representative’s voting behavior on immigration policy. In particular, we find that, consistently with the model’s predictions, representatives from more skilled labor

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<sup>1</sup> See Watts (2002).

<sup>2</sup> See Berry and Soligo (1969). Empirical evidence on the effect of immigration on wages is more controversial. In particular, Borjas (2003, 2006) finds robust evidence on the adverse effect of immigration on native workers’ wages, whereas Card (2009), and Ottaviano and Peri (2008), among others, find a much smaller, and often insignificant, effect.

abundant districts are more likely to support an open immigration policy towards the unskilled. In terms of magnitude, the effects are considerable; our benchmark specification suggests that an 1 percentage point increase in the share of skilled individuals leads to an approximately 1.5 percentage point increase in the probability that the district representative will support a bill liberalizing unskilled immigration.

In addition to districts' labor market characteristics, the literature has suggested that other factors influence voting behavior. Thus, to assess the robustness of our findings, we explore the role played by a constituency's other economic characteristics, political/ideological drivers, and ethnic features. While we find that several of these channels do matter, our main results are unaffected. The expected labor market impact of foreign workers is a robust driver of decision making on immigration policy matters.

To the best of our knowledge, this paper represents the most comprehensive attempt to date to systematically investigate the drivers of immigration policy voting behavior in the post 1965 era. It is also the only one that directly exploits differences in factor endowments across districts to capture the extent of expected labor market competition brought about by the inflow of unskilled foreign workers.

The congressional politics of immigration policy has been the subject of an array of previous studies. Gimpel and Edwards (1999) analyze in their comprehensive study a variety of individual bills, but pay little or no attention to district level economic determinants. In contrast, Goldin's (1994) study of the introduction of the literacy test provision is a pioneering contribution in the economics literature. Several other papers in this tradition focus on a single piece of legislation or a narrow set of legislative initiatives. For instance, Gonzalez and Kamdar (2000) analyze the 1996 *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (H.R. 2202)* and find that representatives of districts characterized by a higher share of workers employed in low-skill intensive industries tend to favor immigration restrictions. Fetzer (2006) found a similar result in his analysis of voting on *H.R. 4437* during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, looking at the distribution of individuals across occupations in a given district.<sup>3</sup> Banaian et al. (2006) - following a similar approach - consider four important bills introduced between 1980 and 1996, and focus on the role played by sectoral employment in shaping voting behavior. Besides covering a larger sample of votes, our analysis has the advantage of

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<sup>3</sup> He finds that support for the bill overwhelmingly came from representatives of districts characterized by a high share of blue collar workers.

considering a direct measure of the educational achievement at the district level, which is less sensitive to short run changes in immigration policy at the national level.

An interesting, recent study by Milner and Tingley (2009) comes closest to ours in scope. The authors analyze a large panel of votes on immigration policy related issues that took place in the U.S. Congress between 1979 and 2006, and explore the role of both economic and non-economic drivers of individual representatives' choices. Importantly, their analysis differs from ours in several respects, both in terms of data and methodology. First, our sample covers a longer time period. Second, Milner and Tingley (2009) include all votes on migration, whether they be final or intermediate votes.<sup>4</sup> They also include immigration bills that were not expected to directly affect the labor supply in the United States. Our focus is narrower. We consider only those bills that – according to the literature – would have a direct impact on the domestic labor supply. We also examine exclusively final passage bills, as the expected district level effects of floor amendments are less clear than for final passage votes. With this narrower focus, we considerably tighten the causal link between labor supply conditions in a district and the voting behavior of that district's elected representative. By including in their sample immigration bills that do not necessarily have an impact on the district's factor supply,<sup>5</sup> Milner and Tingley (2009) find only limited support for the role played by the labor market channel in shaping voting behavior.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews the recent developments in the congressional history of U.S. immigration policy. Section 3 presents a simple theoretical model, which drives our empirical investigation. Section 4 describes our data, while section 5 presents our empirical results. In section 6 we carry out a series of robustness checks, and section 7 concludes the paper.

## **2. A short overview of recent U.S. Migration Policy**

Immigration to the United States soared between 1970 and 2006, and has been shaped by the introduction of the thirteen bills covered in our study (see Table 1).

The *Immigration and Nationality Act* of 1965 abolished the national-origin quota system and replaced it with a framework emphasizing the importance of family ties. This new policy environment led to a substantial increase in the flow of immigrants. Following the first oil crisis, Congress became more restrictive, approving in 1973 *H.R. 392* and *H.R. 891*. The first

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<sup>4</sup> Typically, this involves floor amendments, etc.

<sup>5</sup> See also the discussion in Section 4.

bill provided for employer sanctions to tackle the growing employment of undocumented immigrants. The second extended instead the applicability of the 20,000 per-country cap to migrants from the Western Hemisphere.<sup>6</sup> This measure was designed to limit immigration from Mexico (Gimpel and Edwards 1999).

With growing numbers of refugees, much of the policy debate during the eighties focused on illegal immigration and asylum seekers. While we exclude refugee bills from our analysis,<sup>7</sup> we include those on illegal immigration. The two most important initiatives in this respect are the *Simpson-Mazzoli Bill* (*H.R. 1510*), introduced in 1982, and the *Immigration Reform and Control Act* (*H.R. 3810*, “*IRCA*”) of 1986. The two measures are closely intertwined, since the latter is a revised version of the former. The first major provision of the *Simpson-Mazzoli Bill* was the prohibition of knowingly hiring or recruiting undocumented immigrants, imposing financial and other penalties for employing illegal aliens. The second major provision required employers to verify their employees' immigration status. Finally, the legislation granted amnesty to certain seasonal agricultural workers and illegal immigrants. The bill was very controversial, and although it passed the House in a very close vote in 1984, it never became law in its original form. A new version, the eventual *IRCA*, was introduced in both chambers of the 99<sup>th</sup> congress. Its main innovation was the addition of a temporary program for agricultural workers. The new bill became law on November 6, 1986. The direction of the *IRCA*'s policy change from the status quo is not straightforward to assess. However, two of its features stand out. First, it allowed the legalization of almost 3.5 million illegal immigrants as permanent residents (LeMay 2006). Second, it implemented a controversial guest-worker initiative in the tradition of the *Bracero* program, which enabled a temporary inflow of unskilled farm workers. For these reasons, and following Tichenor (1994), we classified the *IRCA* as pro-immigration. In keeping with the literature, we classified instead the Simpson-Mazzoli bill as anti-immigration, since its provisions sought much more clearly to restrict immigration.<sup>8</sup> The third measure introduced in the eighties was *H.R. 4222*, which extended the legalization provisions of the *IRCA* by six months.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The *Immigration Act* of 1965 imposed per-country ceilings for immigrants from Eastern Hemisphere nations. The overall caps are 120,000 for Western Hemisphere nations (North, and South America) and 170,000 for Eastern Hemisphere nations (Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia).

<sup>7</sup> Refugees and asylum seekers usually do not gain immediate access to the host country's labor market. Furthermore, “warm glow” is likely to play an important role in shaping the voting behavior on policy measures towards refugees and asylum seekers (see Hatton 2004, Hatton and Williamson 2006).

<sup>8</sup> We have also verified that all our results are robust to the exclusion of the *IRCA* bill from our sample. The findings are available from the authors upon request.

<sup>9</sup> Originally the amnesty program was scheduled to run from May 1987 to May 1988.



Differently from *IRCA*, the first major piece of legislation of the nineties, the *Immigration Act* of 1990 (“*IMMACT*”) focused on legal immigration. It had two main goals: the revision of the existing visa allocation system and the introduction of new provisions for skilled immigration. To this end, the *IMMACT* created a “diversity” category, which was meant to represent approximately 6% of new immigrants. Furthermore, it increased the annual cap for legal permanent residents from approximately 500,000 to 675,000. Finally, the act established a short-term amnesty program to grant legal residence to up to 165,000 spouses and minor children of immigrants, who became legal residents under the *IRCA*.

The *IRCA* failed to stem the problem of undocumented immigrants entering the U.S.. To address this concern, the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* (*H.R. 2202*) was introduced in 1996. Besides increasing the size of the U.S. Border Patrol, the bill mandated the construction of a fence along the most heavily trafficked areas of the U.S.-Mexico border. Furthermore, it designated a pilot program to check the job applicant’s immigration status. The act also made the deportation of illegal immigrants substantially easier. Importantly, it restricted access to federal and state benefits to *all* immigrants, legal or illegal.

At the end of the 1990’s, as a result of the high tech boom, public pressure rose to increase the number of highly skilled foreign workers to be admitted. The *Temporary Access to Skilled Workers and H1-B Nonimmigrant Program Improvement Act* of 1998 (*H.R. 3736*), approved by the House on September 24, 1998, temporarily increased the annual cap for H1-B visas.

In the last years of our sample, the events on September 11, 2001 and the consequent fear of additional terrorist attacks have provided powerful catalysts for a series of measures aimed at reducing illegal immigration and tightening immigration law enforcement (*H.R. 418*, *H.R. 4437*, *H.R. 6061*, *H.R. 6094*, and *H.R. 6095*). The most controversial and substantial of these initiatives was the *Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act* of 2005 (*H.R. 4437*). Its major provisions were the creation of a U.S.-Mexico border fence up to 700 miles long and federal custody of locally detained undocumented aliens. Furthermore, the bill imposed a fine of \$3,000 on all undocumented aliens captured in the U.S., who had previously agreed to leave the country voluntarily. It also provided for up to five years imprisonment for any person supporting or hosting undocumented immigrants (Fetzer 2006). The bill was highly controversial and, while it passed the House of Representatives, it did not clear the Senate. As a result, it is the only major immigration act in our sample that did not become public law.

### 3. Theoretical framework

To analyze the drivers of the voting behavior of individual representatives, we consider a simple model with  $D$  heterogeneous districts. Each district is populated by low skilled and high skilled individuals and each agent respectively supplies one unit of either unskilled ( $L$ ) or skilled ( $H$ ) labor. District  $i$  is populated by  $N_{Li}$  low skilled agents and  $N_{Hi}$  high skilled ones, so that the total population is given by  $N = N_{Hi} + N_{Li}$ .<sup>10</sup> We denote by  $\beta_{Li} = N_{Li}/N$ ,  $\beta_{Hi} = N_{Hi}/N = 1 - \beta_{Li}$ , respectively, the share of low and high skilled in the domestic population.

Districts are heterogeneous with respect to their skill mix. Each of them produces one output good,  $Y$ , according to the same, constant returns to scale production technology,  $Y=F(H,L)$ , which can be expressed in intensive units as  $y=f(h)$ , where  $y=Y/L$ ,  $h=H/L$  etc. The production function is well behaved, with  $f'(h)>0$ ,  $f''(h)<0$ . Perfect competition in factor markets insures that the equilibrium rate of return to human capital,  $r$ , is given by  $r=f'(h)$ , while the wage rate is given by  $w=f(h)-hf'(h)$ . In this simple setting, individuals care only about their income.

The preferences of native individuals residing in the district are represented by the local congressperson. In choosing whether to support an immigration policy, the representative maximizes the utility level of the average worker.<sup>11</sup> Thus, his/her objective function can be written as

$$W = \beta_{Li}w(h) + (1 - \beta_{Li})r(h) \quad (1)$$

Two alternative policy options are available: maintaining the status quo, or adopting a measure that will change the skill mix in the population. This simple setting captures the main features of our data, from which we have information on whether a congressperson votes in favor or against a policy that increases the relative supply of unskilled labor.

The main result of our model can be summarized by:

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<sup>10</sup> Note that in our model, we assume that the number of firm owners in the population is negligible, and thus their well-being does not enter the welfare function maximized by the representative. Of course, firms might play an important role in shaping migration policy outcomes through their lobbying activities. We address this issue in our empirical analysis.

<sup>11</sup> The choice of this objective function can be rationalized in a probabilistic voting setting in which two candidates compete for the seat in Congress and do not know the true preferences of the median voter. For more on this issue, see Drazen (2000).

**Proposition 1** The likelihood that a representative will support a more open migration policy towards the more (less) skilled is increasing in the share of the low (highly) skilled in the district's population.

**Proof:** From equation (1) and the factor market equilibrium conditions, we know

$$\frac{\partial W_i}{\partial h_i} = (1 - \beta_{Li} - \beta_{Li} h_i) f''(h_i) > (<) 0 \text{ if and only if } \beta_{Li} > (<) \frac{1}{1+h_i}, \text{ given that } f''(h_i) < 0$$

for all  $h$ . Furthermore, note that  $\frac{\partial W}{\partial h \partial \beta_{Li}} = -(1+h_i) f''(h_i) > 0$ , which establishes the result.  $\square$

As long as the relative weight attached to skilled labor in the objective function of the politician is lower than the relative supply of skilled labor in the district ( $\frac{1-\beta_{Li}}{\beta_{Li}} < h_i$ ), an increase (decrease) in the skilled labor supply is viewed favorably (negatively) by the politician. Across jurisdictions, a district with a higher share of low (highly) skilled in the population is more (less) likely to favor an inflow of skilled immigrants. In other words, our model suggests that the complementarity (and substitutability) between a district's factor endowment and the expected labor market effect of immigration is an important driver of a congressperson's voting behavior. The mechanics of Proposition 1 are illustrated in Figure 1, and represent the main prediction we will assess in our empirical analysis.

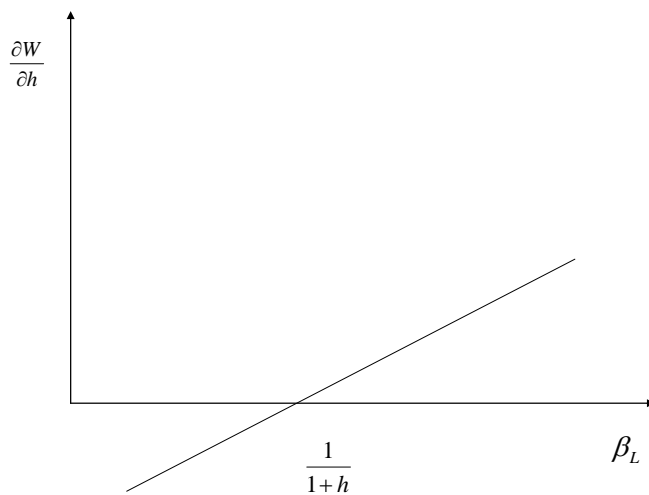


Figure 1: Skilled and unskilled abundant districts

#### 4. Data and summary statistics

Our data come from various sources. We start with the Congressional Roll Call Voting Dataset of the Policy Agenda Project and the THOMAS database maintained by the Library of Congress. The two sources contain a comprehensive register of the votes in the U.S. House of Representatives. We used them to identify and collect information on the immigration related initiatives introduced between 1970 and 2006. Our analysis focuses on bills with recorded roll call votes, as these enable us to precisely observe the individual behavior of House Representatives.<sup>12</sup> Since both databases provide only summary information about the content of bills, we supplemented them using additional resources, like the Congressional Quarterly, the roll call dataset maintained by Rohde (2010) and existing historical accounts like the one by Gimpel and Edwards (1999). We then use the full text of the legislation to classify the immigration bills into four categories: general immigration, illegal migration, refugees and asylum, and naturalization and integration. We restrict our analysis to bills belonging to the first two categories, because they are most directly linked to the inflow of foreign labor.

Moreover, we consider only initiatives with a potential impact on the supply of unskilled labor.<sup>13</sup> In particular, for our purposes, an immigration bill is a measure that has a *direct* (positive or negative) impact on the size of the unskilled labor force in the U.S.. Therefore, we exclude, for instance, measures that provide public goods to illegal migrants or federal reimbursement of health and education costs to states. Finally, we focus on *final passage votes*, which determine whether a bill passes the House. In doing so, we exclude votes on amendments and other intermediate procedural steps.<sup>14</sup> We have decided to follow this strategy because the expectations on the effects of floor amendments are less clear cut than for final passage votes. Voting on amendments is often strategic and is therefore less likely to distinctly reflect the interests of the legislator's constituency.<sup>15</sup> Narrowing the data according

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<sup>12</sup> Besides recorded votes, two additional types of votes take place in the House. The first is "voice voting," which is usually employed when a question is introduced on the floor. By this method, members of Congress who are in favor of the bill or amendment shout in unison "Aye", followed by those voting "No". In the case of standing or division voting, the principle is the same, except that the representatives who are in favor will rise and stand until counted instead of shouting. In both cases only the vote totals are announced, and no individual member's vote is recorded. Individual votes are recorded if this is required by at least one-fifth of the members present, or if this is demanded by one member in the case that no quorum exists (Davis 2006). The request for recorded votes is typically a sign for lack of consensus and indicates the presence of a controversial decision process (Gimpel and Edwards 1999).

<sup>13</sup> The only exception is specification 4 in Table 6, where we include the votes on the only bill affecting the supply of skilled foreign workers, i.e. *H.R. 3736* of 1998.

<sup>14</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the legislative process on the House floor, see Davis (2006).

<sup>15</sup> For example, amendments can be used to kill bills on the floor. A well-known example in the political science literature is the "Powell Amendment" of 1956. It referred to a House bill which was meant to increase federal

to these criteria results in the House bills enumerated in Table 1. Most of the votes are relatively close, reflecting the controversial nature of immigration policy in the United States.

We next match our bill information to individual House voting data from VOTEVIEW (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). The VOTEVIEW database contains variables, such as the House Representative's name, party affiliation, and state and congressional districts, that enable us to uniquely identify the legislators and link them to their constituency. Finally, we match individual voting data to Census data on the economic and non economic characteristics of electoral constituencies.<sup>16</sup>

Our dependent variable is the voting behavior of district's  $i$  representative on an immigration bill  $j$  at time  $t$  ( $Vote_{ijt}$ ). Almost all of our analysis focuses on bills affecting the supply of unskilled immigrants. In the case of bills *liberalizing* unskilled immigration a vote is coded 1 if the district's representative supports more open immigration and 0 otherwise. In the case of legislations *restricting* unskilled immigration a vote is coded 0 if the representative supports restricting immigration and 1 otherwise. Finally, in the case of the bill *H.R. 3736* from 1998, a vote coded 0 indicates support for increasing the supply of skilled migrants, whereas a vote coded 1 indicates opposition to this policy.<sup>17</sup>

The main explanatory variable of interest in our analysis is a district's skill ratio,  $SkillRatio_{it}$ . We measure this variable with the ratio of high-skilled individuals in the population over 25 years of age at time  $t$  in congressional district  $i$ . High-skilled individuals are defined as those having earned at least a bachelor degree. Based on our theoretical model, the district's skill endowments and expected changes in the labor supply from immigration should shape voting behavior. In particular, we expect that the likelihood to vote in favor of liberalizing the immigration of unskilled workers increases with the share of the highly skilled population at working age.

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funding for school construction. The Powell Amendment proposed that funding should only be given to school districts that were free of racial segregation. Empirical evidence suggests that legislators anticipated that the adoption of the amendment would lead to a rejection of the related aid-to-education bill. The voting behavior of the legislators on the Powell amendment was therefore strongly influenced by strategic interests (Poole and Rosenthal 1997).

<sup>16</sup> To this end, we use data from the Congressional District Data Files of Adler (2003) and Lublin (1997), who aggregated Census data at the congressional district level, taking into account decennial redistricting. We supplement this data also with information taken directly from the US Census Congressional district files.

<sup>17</sup> Our model suggests that a representative's vote is driven by the expected effect of the bill on a district's relative skill supply. Thus, an increase in the supply of skilled workers is equivalent to a decrease in the supply of unskilled workers.

We also control for unemployment and the share of farm workers, which proxies for the size of the agricultural sector. Moreover, we account for the industrial structure of a district by including the share of individuals employed in manufacturing, construction and wholesale and retail. To capture welfare state influences, we use two variables: median family income, and the ratio of average to median family income, which measures the extent of inequality within the district.

The ideological orientation of a representative is captured by party affiliation, whereas to measure the district's orientation, we use the share of Democratic votes in the last congressional election.<sup>18</sup>

The role of immigrant networks and additional ethnic characteristics of the district is analyzed using the share of foreign-born and the shares of African-Americans and Hispanics in the population. To account for the possibility that recent immigrants might affect representatives' preferences differently from existing immigrants, we use instead the change in the share of foreign born.

Finally, we explore how geography shapes voting on immigration policy. To this end, we include the share of the population living in urban areas, capturing potential attitudinal differences between rural and urban areas. We further investigate state differences by running separate regressions for representatives from South-Western and high immigration states.<sup>19</sup>

Table 2 provides summary statistics for the variables described above. Two points are worth highlighting. First, over the entire observation period, 36% of the representatives voted for bills increasing the relative supply of unskilled workers. However, there are important differences over time. While almost 41% of the district representatives supported this type of measures up to 1990, the average thereafter declined substantially to about 32%. Second, the data on the skill composition of the resident population suggests that in our sample, on average, almost one out of every five Americans over 25 holds at least a bachelor's degree. This rather high figure is in part due to the fact that out of the thirteen bills included in our study, five have been introduced during the 109<sup>th</sup> congress, i.e. between 2005 and 2006.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Data on share of Democratic votes comes from Lee et al. (2004) and for the 109th Congress from Chandler et al. (2008).

<sup>19</sup> See the notes to Table 6 for the exact definitions.

<sup>20</sup> Educational attainment in the US has substantially increased over our sample period. Between 1970 and 2000, the population share over 25 with at least a bachelor's degree climbed from 10.7% to 24.4% (Bauman and Graf 2003).

Both the skill ratio and voting behavior on immigration exhibit strong variation across congressional districts. The main goal of our paper is to investigate whether a systematic relationship exists between a representative's voting behavior on immigration and the relative skill composition of his/her home district. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate this point. Focusing on the congressional districts of New York State, Figure 2 plots the votes cast on the anti-immigration *Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437)* introduced during the 109<sup>th</sup> congress. In Figure 3, we use Census data to construct the district level share of highly skilled in the population. The large majority of the legislators who supported a less restrictive immigration policy came from districts with skill ratios above average.<sup>21</sup> However, the figure also shows that not all representatives from districts with high skill ratios voted in favor of a liberal immigration policy. This highlights the necessity to systematically control for additional district characteristics.

## 5. Empirical Analysis

As the theoretical model suggests, a representative's vote on an immigration bill is a function of the district's skill composition. In particular, we expect labor market complementarities to play a key role. Thus, in districts with relatively more skilled labor, representatives should favor liberalizing unskilled migration. To assess this theoretical prediction, we estimate the following probit model:

$$prob(Vote_{it} = 1 | Z_{it}) = \Phi(\beta_1 Skill_{it} + \beta_2 X_{it} + I_t + I_s + I_t \times I_s) \quad (2)$$

where  $Vote_{it}$  is a dichotomous variable taking a value of one if a representative of district  $i$  votes for a bill liberalizing unskilled immigration at time  $t$ ,  $\Phi(\cdot)$  represents the cumulative distribution function of a standard normal,  $Skill_{it}$  is the share of the population over 25 years of age with at least a bachelor's degree,  $X_{it}$  is a vector of additional explanatory variables specific to district  $i$ , and  $\beta$  is the vector of parameters to be estimated. Furthermore, we include time ( $I_t$ ) and state fixed effects ( $I_s$ ) to account for unobserved time- and state-specific effects.<sup>22</sup> We also allow the effects of state-specific unobserved shocks to vary over time using a full set of two-way interactions ( $I_t \times I_s$ ). In order to simplify the interpretation of our results, all our tables report marginal effects. Thus, our estimates capture the change in the probability of voting in favor of a more open immigration policy due to an infinitesimal

<sup>21</sup> During the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, 24% on average of a district's population was skilled.

<sup>22</sup> We use state rather than district fixed effects. The use of district fixed effects over a long time horizon is problematic since the geographic definition of congressional districts changes following each decennial census.

change in each independent, continuous variable, and a discrete change in the probability for dichotomous variables.

Table 3 contains our main specifications. Our first regression (column 1) focuses on economic drivers that work through the labor market. As predicted by our theoretical model, we find that labor market complementarities are important. Representatives from districts with a higher relative share of skilled workers are more likely to support immigration policies aimed at increasing the supply of unskilled workers. This finding is robust to the inclusion of additional district level controls. Furthermore, we find a positive relationship between a district's unemployment rate and voting on liberalizing low-skilled immigration. This result, which is counterintuitive but common in the literature (see for instance Gimpel and Edwards 1999), is likely due to omitted variable bias (see the discussion below).

To control for the importance of sectoral employment, whose role, for instance, is emphasized by Gonzalez and Kamdar (2006), we also include the share of agricultural workers. A priori, the sign of the relationship between the importance of agriculture and voting behavior is ambiguous. On the one hand, unskilled and illegal immigrants may compete with native workers in agriculture (Hanson and Spilimbergo 1999, 2001). That competition points to a negative relationship. On the other hand, if agriculture is important in a given district, agricultural interest groups may convince politicians of the need for an abundant labor supply. This line of reasoning points to a positive relationship. Our results do not favor one direction or the other. We find that the share of farm workers is negatively related with the likelihood to vote in favor of immigration liberalization, but this result, as we discuss later on, is not robust.

In the second regression (column 2), we examine the role of the welfare state. An abundant literature highlights the welfare state's importance in shaping individual-level attitudes towards immigration (Hanson et al. 2007, Dustmann and Preston 2007, Facchini and Mayda 2009). We expect this channel to play an important role in our analysis as well. In particular, we expect legislators from *wealthier* constituencies to exhibit less favorable attitudes towards unskilled immigration, as unskilled immigrants are likely to be net receivers of benefits from the welfare state. Economic theory (Meltzer and Richard 1981) also suggests that inequality within a constituency should increase redistribution by a democratic government. Thus, representatives of districts characterized by higher inequality should support unskilled



immigration less, as the burden of poor, unskilled immigrants is likely to be larger.<sup>23</sup> Our findings are broadly consistent with these theoretical expectations. Representatives of wealthier districts are significantly less likely to support unskilled immigration (column 2). The latter result is robust to the introduction of additional controls (see columns 3-4).<sup>24</sup> Representatives from districts characterized by higher inequality are also less likely to support unskilled immigration. This effect is greater when controlling for the share of foreign born (column 4).

Next, we account for political/ideological factors (column 3 of Table 3). First, we control for the representative's party affiliation. We find that Democrats are significantly more likely to vote in favor of immigration liberalization. This result is in line with earlier findings by Gimpel and Edwards (1999), who conclude that "recorded votes on immigration policy have become more partisan over time, even after controlling for alternative influences on congressional decision making such as region and constituency characteristics."<sup>25</sup> Notice that accounting for the representative's party affiliation substantially reduces the effect of the share of farm workers on the legislator's voting behavior. This suggests that the results in columns 1 and 2 were driven by an omitted variable bias. Indeed, districts characterized by a higher employment share in agriculture tend also to be more conservative and, without controlling for ideology, the sectoral composition effect was confounded with the ideological dimension.

Lee et al. (2004) argue that an elected representative's party affiliation is an imprecise proxy for a *district's* partisan leaning. Consequently, in column 3 we also control for the extent of party strength in the previous congressional election. Our results show that districts with a higher share of Democratic votes in the last election are more likely to support legislation liberalizing immigration, but the effect is not statistically significant.

In the fourth and last specification of Table 3 we look at geographic and network factors. It is well known that migrants tend to concentrate in urban areas (Card 2009). Thus, we explore whether representatives from urban districts vote differently from those from rural districts. Our results show that a representative from a district with more constituents in urban areas is

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<sup>23</sup> Note that we do not have data on the size of the welfare state at the district level. We proxy for it using the extent of inequality. We are doing so following Meltzer and Richard (1981). For recent empirical evidence supporting the predictions of this model, see Borge and Rattso (2004).

<sup>24</sup> Note that since we include a full set of state and year interactions in all our empirical analyses, we cannot separately control for the extent of redistribution carried out at the state level.

<sup>25</sup> The authors provide evidence that the cleavage between Republicans and Democrats has steadily increased since the 96th Congress (1979-80), whereas Republicans tended to oppose liberalized immigration.

more likely to support liberalizing unskilled immigration. However, the effect is not significant. We also find that a higher share of foreign-born leads to a higher likelihood of voting to liberalize unskilled immigration. At least two possible explanations exist for this result: social and family networks, and identification with minorities. First, freer immigration helps relatives and friends of existing immigrants enter the U.S.; this channel has been found to be very important in the labor market (Munshi 2003). Second, existing immigrants identify with new immigrants due to their own immigration experience.

To account for the effects of immigration spikes over time we also control for the growth rate in the share of foreign born (Money 1997). We find that recent spikes in the share of foreign born negatively affect the probability of voting for immigration liberalization, although the results are not statistically significant. Finally, we assess the role played by the racial composition of the district, focusing on the share of Hispanics and African-Americans. We find no significant effect for the former, whereas we do find a positive and significant effect (at the ten percent level) for the latter.<sup>26</sup> Evidence suggests that African-American legislators tend to see the immigration issue within a minority rights framework. Based on the ideas of civil rights and equal opportunity, they build political coalitions with other ethnic minorities and tend to support open immigration policies (Gimpel and Edwards 1999, Gonzalez and Kamdar 2000, Fetzer 2006). Controlling for the share of African-Americans in the population makes the unemployment rate statistically insignificant at conventional levels. This result suggests that an omitted variable bias might affect our initial specifications. African-Americans are more likely to be unemployed, and representatives of districts with a high share of African-Americans are more likely to support open immigration policies.<sup>27</sup>

To summarize, the findings in Table 3 provide strong support for our theoretical model's predictions. Our benchmark analysis (column 4 in Table 3) not only suggests that the district's skill mix significantly affects the voting behavior of an elected representative, but that the effect is substantial. In particular, a one percent increase in the share of highly skilled individuals in a district is associated with a 1.46 percent higher probability of voting for liberalizing unskilled immigration.

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<sup>26</sup> The insignificance of the coefficient for Hispanics might be driven by the small size of the Hispanic population during the early congressional sessions.

<sup>27</sup> Indeed, we also run a specification identical to the one reported in column 4, from which we excluded the unemployment share, and the coefficient on African-American is positive and strongly significant. The results are available upon request from the authors.

## 6. Additional results

In this section we assess the robustness of our empirical analysis. We start in Table 4 by considering alternative measures of a district's economic characteristics. In column 1, we replace the share of high skilled individuals with the share of low skilled individuals, *Alternative SkillRatio*. Analogous to *SkillRatio*, we define *Alternative SkillRatio* as the share of individuals who did not complete high school. Our results are in line with the model's predictions. A district's representative is less likely to vote for liberalizing unskilled immigration when lower skilled individuals make up a larger share of the population. The results for the impact of other district characteristics are similar to the ones in our preferred specification (column 4 of Table 3).

In column 2, we use an alternative definition of a district's skill composition that is based on occupation rather than educational attainment.<sup>28</sup> *SkillRatio Occupation* is the share of individuals over 16 employed in executive, administrative, managerial and professional occupations. We find that voting for liberalizing unskilled immigration is more likely when a district has a higher share of workers in these occupations. Thus, our model's predictions are supported also with this alternative measure.<sup>29</sup>

In column 3, we further explore the role played by sectoral employment. In particular, we modify our benchmark specification (column 4 in Table 3) by controlling for the share of employment in manufacturing and in a combined category of construction and retail. The sign and significance of *SkillRatio* is unaffected. Our results indicate that representatives from districts with more manufacturing are less likely to vote for liberalizing unskilled immigration. In contrast, the coefficient of construction and retail exhibits a negative sign. However, the two effects are not statistically significant.<sup>30</sup>

Up to this point, we have controlled for the ideology of a legislator by using his/her party affiliation.<sup>31</sup> The latter is only a proxy for the congressperson's true views. Moreover, legislators are characterized by a number of other individual characteristics that we cannot observe. Some of these unobservable features may be related to the skill composition of a

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<sup>28</sup> This definition is in line with Milner and Tingley (2009).

<sup>29</sup> This result is not surprising given that the correlation between *SkillRatio* and *SkillRatio Occupation* is 0.93.

<sup>30</sup> In an additional specification (available upon request) we used political action committee contributions by corporations and labor unions to assess whether lobbying activity affects voting behavior on immigration legislation. We did not find the contributions to play a role and, more importantly, including these additional controls does not affect the sign and significance of our main result.

<sup>31</sup> Our results are similar if we use alternative measures of ideology from the political science literature like DW-NOMINATE or ADA scores.

district. For example, liberal legislators may be more likely to represent high skill labor abundant districts. For this reason, in Table 5 we estimate our benchmark specification, adding individual legislator fixed effects. By doing so, we control for unobservable characteristics of the representative which are invariant to time. We therefore exploit the variation in the district skill composition to estimate whether the same representative changes his/her support for unskilled immigration when the district's skill composition varies over time.

Due to the incidental parameter problem, we cannot run a probit estimation with individual level fixed effects. Since all the results reported in the paper are marginal effects, for comparison purposes Table 5 contains estimates from a linear probability model, but we have also used a conditional logit specification, obtaining similar results.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, the sign and significance of our key explanatory variables are not affected. This finding strongly suggest the existence of a causal link between districts' skill composition and representatives' voting behavior.

In Table 6, we check for robustness with respect to the geography of immigration and changes in the sample size. In column 1, we limit our bill sample to the four major immigration reforms introduced during the period (*H.R.3810*, *H.R.2202*, *H.R.4300*, and *H.R.4437*). In column 2, we restrict our sample to districts from the Sunbelt states, which are characterized by strong population growth during the period we are considering. In column 3, we focus on states with large inflows of immigrants.<sup>33</sup> Our main results are unaffected by any of these sample limitations. The coefficient of *SkillRatio* remains positive and significant in each of these alternative specifications.

Rather than limiting our sample, in column 4, we extend it by including legislation aimed at changing skilled immigration. As discussed in Section 4, *H.R. 3736* of 1998 is the only bill on skilled immigration introduced in our sample period, for which roll call votes are available. The measure temporarily increased the annual quota for H1-B visas. A vote in favor of this bill has been coded as a "0," whereas a vote against it as "1." Including this measure in our sample does not affect our main findings.

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<sup>32</sup> The coefficient estimate for the share of skilled in the population is 20.06, and it is significant at the one percent level.

<sup>33</sup> The 15 states with the highest share of foreign-born in the population during our observation period.

## 7. Conclusions

The making of immigration policy is one of the most controversial and divisive issues in the United States today. Ideology, race and ethnic considerations feature prominently in much of the debate, both among the broader public and elected representatives. Individual level economic attributes have been shown to play an important role in shaping attitudes towards immigration. In this paper, we analyze instead the role played by economic determinants at the district level in influencing the voting behavior of elected representatives.

To carry out our analysis, we have developed a simple theoretical model that emphasizes the importance of the skill composition of a constituency. Our framework predicts that legislators are more likely to favor a policy increasing unskilled immigration, if skilled labor is more abundant in their district.

We have empirically assessed these predictions using a new dataset, which includes all U.S. House of Representatives roll call votes on immigration policy over the period 1970-2006. We have found that labor market factors, as captured by the complementarity /substitutability between the domestic and foreign labor forces, are key drivers of a legislator's voting behavior. In particular, representatives of skilled labor abundant constituencies are systematically more likely to vote for liberalizing unskilled immigration, whereas congress members from more unskilled labor abundant districts are less likely to do so. These effects hold both when we compare representatives across districts, as well as when we consider the same congressperson over time.

Our analysis has accounted also for many of the other economic and non economic determinants of voting behavior, which have been emphasized in the existing literature. While we find some of them to play a significant role, the skill mix of the constituency is a remarkably robust driver of the immigration voting decision. This evidence suggests that a simple factor-proportions-analysis model can provide important insights on policy making in one of the most controversial aspects of the globalization process.

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**Table 1: Final passage votes on immigration issues in the House of Representatives  
1970-2006**

Cong	Date	Bill	Topic	Keyword	Direction	Yes	No	Sum	
1	93	3.5.1973	H.R.392	Illegal Immigration	Employer Sanctions	Contra	297	63	360
2	93	26.9.1973	H.R.891	Immigration	Rodino bill	Contra	336	30	366
3	98	20.6.1984	H.R.1510	Illegal Immigration	Simpson-Mazzoli Bill	Contra	216	211	427
4	99	9.10.1986	H.R.3810*	Illegal Immigration	Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)	Pro	230	166	396
5	100	21.4.1988	H.R.4222	Illegal Immigration	Extension of legalization by 6 months	Pro	213	201	414
6	101	3.10.1990	H.R.4300*	Immigration	The 1990 Immigration Act (IMMACT)	Pro	227	192	419
7	104	21.3.1996	H.R.2202*	Illegal Immigration	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act	Contra	333	87	420
8	109	10.2.2005	H.R.418	Illegal Immigration	Real ID Act	Contra	261	161	422
9	109	16.12.2005	H.R.4437*	Illegal Immigration	Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act	Contra	239	182	421
10	109	14.9.2006	H.R.6061	Illegal Immigration	Secure Fence Act	Contra	283	138	421
11	109	21.9.2006	H.R.6094	Illegal Immigration	Community Protection Act of 2006	Contra	328	95	423
12	109	21.9.2006	H.R.6095	Illegal Immigration	Immigration Law Enforcement Act of 2006	Contra	277	140	417
Total number of individual roll call votes on unskilled immigration legislation:								4,906	
13	105	25.9.1998	H.R.3736	Skilled Immigration	Skilled Workers and H-1B	Pro	288	133	421
Total number of individual roll call votes on immigration legislation:								5,327	

*Cong* and *Date* describe the congress/date in which/when the vote took place. *Bill* shows the name under which the bill is originating in the House of Representatives ("H.R."). Major immigration legislations are marked with an asterisk (\*). *Topic* classifies the broad issue of the bill. *Keyword* provides some basic information about the content of the legislation. *Direction* shows whether the bill is pro or contra liberalizing immigration. *Yes/No* show the overall number of Yes/No Votes. *Sum* shows the overall number of votes. All figures are calculated on the basis of individual voting records.



**Table 2: Summary statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote <sub>ijt</sub>	5327	0.36	0.48	0	1
SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	5323	0.19	0.09	0.02	0.57
Alternative SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	5323	0.29	0.13	0.04	0.75
SkillRatio Occupation <sub>it</sub>	5325	0.27	0.08	0.09	0.58
Farm Worker <sub>it</sub>	5320	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.22
Manufacturing <sub>it</sub>	5318	0.17	0.08	0.03	0.52
Wholesale and Retail <sub>it</sub>	5320	0.17	0.03	0.09	0.43
Construction <sub>it</sub>	5320	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.16
Unemployment <sub>it</sub>	5320	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.22
Median Family Income <sub>it</sub>	5327	33410	18411	4660	91571
Mean Family Income <sub>it</sub>	5322	41101	24366	5939	141672
Inequality <sub>it</sub>	5322	1.21	0.10	0.86	1.97
Democrat <sub>it</sub>	5327	0.51	0.50	0	1
Share Democrat Votes <sub>it</sub>	5298	0.52	0.25	0.00	1.00
Urban <sub>it</sub>	5324	0.74	0.24	0.00	1.00
Foreign-born <sub>it</sub>	5327	0.08	0.09	0.00	0.59
FB growth <sub>it</sub>	5327	0.43	0.76	-0.82	6.00
African-American <sub>it</sub>	5327	0.12	0.15	0.00	0.92
Hispanic <sub>it</sub>	5173	0.09	0.14	0.00	0.84

*Vote<sub>ijt</sub>* is coded as 1 if the representative of district *i* at time *t* votes on bill *j* in favor of immigration, 0 otherwise. *SkillRatio<sub>it</sub>* measures the percentage of the population over 25 with at least a bachelor degree. *Alternative SkillRatio<sub>it</sub>* is the percentage of the population over 25 with less than 4 years of High School. *SkillRatio Occupation<sub>it</sub>* describes the percentage of individuals over 16 employed in executive, administrative, managerial and professional specialty occupations. *Farm Worker<sub>it</sub>* measures the share of farm workers in the total labor force. *Manufacturing<sub>it</sub>* describes the share of individuals employed in manufacturing in the total labor force. *Wholesale and Retail<sub>it</sub>*, respectively *Construction<sub>it</sub>*, measure the share of people employed in wholesale and retail, respectively construction, in the total labor force. *Unemployment<sub>it</sub>* is the share of unemployed individuals in the total labor force. *Median Family Income<sub>it</sub>* measures the median family income within a district in dollars. *Mean Family Income<sub>it</sub>* measures the mean family income within a district in dollars. *Inequality<sub>it</sub>* describes the ratio between mean and median family income within a district. *Democrat<sub>it</sub>* is a dummy coded as 1 if the representative of the district belongs to the Democratic Party. *Share Democrat Votes<sub>it</sub>* is the Democratic share of the two-party vote at the past House elections. *Foreign-born<sub>it</sub>* is the share of foreign-born individuals in the total population. *FB growth<sub>it</sub>* measures how the share of *Foreign-Born* share has changed related to the previous period. *African-American<sub>it</sub>* is the share of African-American individuals in the total population. *Hispanic<sub>it</sub>* is the share of individuals with Hispanic origin in the total population.

**Table 3: Empirical results for all constituencies and unskilled immigration bills**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dependent Variable: Vote on liberalization of unskilled immigration				
SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	1.063** (0.238)	1.759** (0.328)	1.567** (0.395)	1.460** (0.294)
Unemployment <sub>it</sub>	11.81** (1.515)	9.082** (2.753)	4.852** (1.756)	3.054 (1.714)
Farm Worker <sub>it</sub>	-4.888** (0.841)	-5.432** (1.211)	-2.029** (0.602)	0.154 (0.835)
ln(Family Income <sub>it</sub> )		-0.571** (0.163)	-0.307* (0.150)	-0.258* (0.111)
Inequality <sub>it</sub>		-0.00665 (0.243)	-0.000816 (0.201)	-0.366* (0.156)
Democrat <sub>it</sub>			0.396** (0.0228)	0.378** (0.0497)
Share Dem Votes <sub>it</sub>			0.132 (0.0867)	0.0736 (0.0731)
Urban <sub>it</sub>				0.140 (0.133)
Foreign-born <sub>it</sub>				1.067** (0.364)
FB growth <sub>it</sub>				-0.0168 (0.0139)
Hispanic <sub>it</sub>				0.275 (0.184)
African-American <sub>it</sub>				0.321 (0.173)
Observations	4,290	4,290	4,290	4,290
Pseudo R-squared	0.315	0.322	0.440	0.464
Log Likelihood	-1952	-1931	-1597	-1527

The table reports marginal effects of probit regressions. Robust standard errors, clustered by state, are presented in parentheses. All specifications include year and state fixed effects as well as state\*year interactions. \*\* Significant at 1%, \* significant at 5%. See end of table 2 for a definition of the variables.

**Table 4: Robustness checks: Economic channel**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent Variable: Vote on liberalization of unskilled immigration			
SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>			1.421** (0.328)
Alternative SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	-1.156** (0.309)		
SkillRatio Occupation <sub>it</sub>		1.901** (0.470)	
Unemployment <sub>it</sub>	2.783 (1.657)	2.513 (1.577)	3.093 (1.649)
Farm Worker <sub>it</sub>	0.447 (0.793)	0.160 (0.781)	-0.187 (0.841)
Manufacturing <sub>it</sub>			-0.340 (0.210)
Constr/Ret <sub>it</sub>			0.620 (0.811)
ln (Family Income <sub>it</sub> )	-0.138 (0.112)	-0.285 (0.158)	-0.237 (0.128)
Inequality <sub>it</sub>	0.0632 (0.103)	-0.433* (0.171)	-0.357* (0.154)
Democrat <sub>it</sub>	0.380** (0.0346)	0.377** (0.0253)	0.379** (0.0366)
Share Democrat Votes <sub>it</sub>	0.106 (0.0811)	0.0881 (0.0765)	0.0770 (0.0743)
Urban <sub>it</sub>	0.100 (0.129)	0.124 (0.134)	0.0835 (0.148)
Foreign-born <sub>it</sub>	1.424** (0.313)	1.200** (0.310)	1.109** (0.327)
FB growth <sub>it</sub>	-0.00728 (0.0144)	-0.0123 (0.0140)	-0.0138 (0.0138)
Hispanic <sub>it</sub>	0.364 (0.216)	0.307* (0.146)	0.288 (0.171)
African-American <sub>it</sub>	0.434* (0.180)	0.401** (0.153)	0.362* (0.176)
Year Effects	yes	yes	yes
State Effects	yes	yes	yes
State * Year Interactions	yes	yes	yes
Observations	4,290	4,290	4,290
Pseudo R-squared	0.463	0.465	0.465
Log Likelihood	-1531	-1524	-1524

The table reports marginal effects of probit regressions. Robust standard errors, clustered by state, are presented in parentheses. \*\* Significant at 1%, \* significant at 5%. See end of table 2 for a definition of the variables. Notes (1) The *Alternative SkillRatio<sub>it</sub>* is the percentage of the population over 25 with less than 4 years of High School. (2) *SkillRatio Occupation<sub>it</sub>* describes the percentage of individuals over 16 employed in executive, administrative, managerial and professional specialty occupations. (3) *Manufacturing<sub>it</sub>* measures the share of individuals employed in manufacturing in the total labor force. *Constr/Ret<sub>it</sub>* measures the share of people employed in wholesale & retail and construction in the total labor force.

**Table 5: Legislator fixed effects**

	(1)
Dependent Variable: Vote on liberalization of unskilled immigration	
SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	1.784* (0.746)
Unemployment <sub>it</sub>	3.188** (1.135)
Farm Worker <sub>it</sub>	0.0575 (1.943)
ln(Family Income <sub>it</sub> )	-0.427 (0.272)
Inequality <sub>it</sub>	-0.175 (0.406)
Democrat <sub>it</sub>	0.163** (0.0605)
Share Dem Votes <sub>it</sub>	0.303** (0.0969)
Urban <sub>it</sub>	-0.174 (0.184)
Foreign-born <sub>it</sub>	0.291 (0.665)
FB growth <sub>it</sub>	-0.00577 (0.0200)
Hispanic <sub>it</sub>	-0.271 (0.634)
African-American <sub>it</sub>	0.122 (0.467)
Year Effects	yes
State Effects	no
State * Year Interactions	no
Legislator fixed effects	yes
Observations	4,290
R-squared	0.660

The table reports coefficients from a linear probability model. Robust standard errors, clustered by legislators, are presented in parentheses. \*\* Significant at 1%, \* significant at 5%. See end of table 2 for a definition of the variables.

**Table 6: Robustness checks: Geography & sample**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Major bills	South-Western states	High immigration states	Skilled immigration bill included
Dependent Variable: Vote on liberalization of unskilled immigration (except (4))				
SkillRatio <sub>it</sub>	1.971* (0.783)	1.504** (0.258)	1.679** (0.290)	1.185** (0.296)
Unemployment <sub>it</sub>	5.254** (1.922)	-1.221 (1.775)	1.188 (1.803)	2.878* (1.376)
Farm Worker <sub>it</sub>	2.639 (1.467)	0.234 (1.095)	0.433 (1.058)	-0.494 (0.755)
ln (Family Income <sub>it</sub> )	-0.431 (0.386)	-0.386** (0.112)	-0.202 (0.131)	-0.220 (0.115)
Inequality <sub>it</sub>	-0.796* (0.338)	-0.310 (0.198)	-0.549** (0.146)	-0.331* (0.156)
Democrat <sub>it</sub>	0.566** (0.0390)	0.426** (0.0279)	0.407** (0.0388)	0.366** (0.0316)
Share Democrat Votes <sub>it</sub>	0.0116 (0.155)	0.425** (0.154)	0.242* (0.103)	0.0918 (0.0736)
Urban <sub>it</sub>	0.589* (0.236)	0.114 (0.344)	-0.0756 (0.204)	0.0158 (0.113)
Foreign-born <sub>it</sub>	1.612* (0.655)	0.769** (0.187)	1.366** (0.374)	1.044** (0.341)
FB growth <sub>it</sub>	-0.0579* (0.0277)	-0.00726 (0.0254)	-0.0315 (0.0205)	-0.0328* (0.0152)
Hispanic <sub>it</sub>	-0.106 (0.380)	0.649** (0.118)	0.604** (0.121)	0.228 (0.192)
African-American <sub>it</sub>	0.001000 (0.375)	0.0655 (0.112)	0.424** (0.158)	0.360* (0.164)
Year effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
State effects	yes	yes	yes	yes
State * Year Interactions	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observations	1,422	1,144	2,322	4,649
Pseudo R-squared	0.473	0.425	0.462	0.436
Log Likelihood	-515.4	-453.1	-859.8	-1738

The table reports marginal effects of probit regressions. Robust standard errors, clustered by state, are presented in parentheses. \*\* Significant at 1%, \* significant at 5%. In column (1) we include only voting records on major immigration legislations (see table 1: H.R.3810, H.R.2202, H.R.4300, and H.R.4437). In column (2), we include only voting records of representatives from *South-Western states* (Arizona, California, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah). In column (3) we include only voting records of representatives from *High immigration states* (15 states with the highest share of foreign-born population: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Oregon, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, and Washington). Finally, in column (4) we include voting records on H.R.3736.

Figure 2: Voting on H.R.4437, New York State 109th Congress.

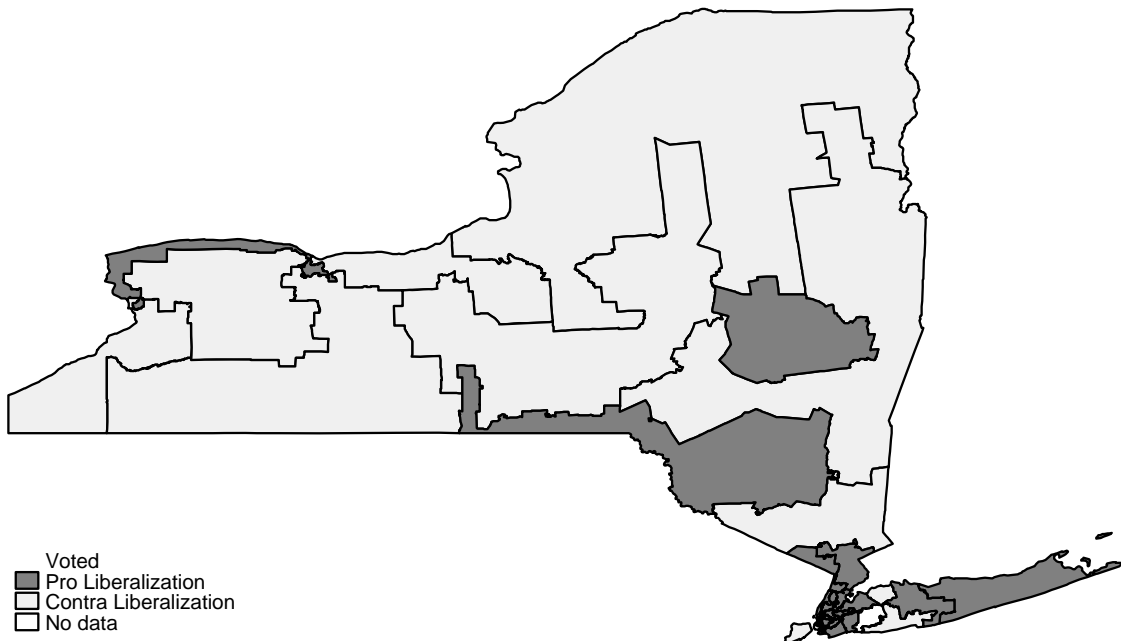


Figure 3: Skill ratio, New York State 109th Congress.

